

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01580 122154Z

64

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 AGR-20 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03 PA-03

PRS-01 USIA-12 OMB-01 RSR-01 /121 W

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R 122118Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1296

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PASS DEPT OF AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, CA

SUBJECT: RAILWAY STRIKE IMMINENT

1. SEVEN NON-OPERATING RAILWAY UNIONS ARE PREPARING MOUNT ROTATING STRIKES AGAINST NATION'S RAILWAY LINES AFTER TURNING DOWN CONCILIATION BOARD'S RECOMMENDATIONS. STRIKES COULD LEGALLY BEGIN JULY 21. KEY ISSUES ARE WAGES, PENSIONS AND JOB SECURITY. NON-OPS REPRESENT ABOUT 56,000 WORKERS IN CANADA COMPRISING SUCH CATEGORIES AS CLERKS, PASSENGER AGENTS, PORTERS, SIGNALMEN AND MAINTENANCE-OF-WAY EMPLOYEES. ONE COMPANY OFFICIAL QUOTED AS SAYING THAT LARGE-SCALE WALKOUTS WOULD PROBABLY LEAD TO EARLY SHUTDOWN OF ENTIRE RAIL SYSTEM WHILE PINPRICK STOPPAGES COULD DISRUPT OPERATIONS FOR WEEKS OR MONTHS.

2. SENIOR LABOUR DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT TWO SIDES ARE FAR APART AND SITUATION "LOOKS BLACK." HE PREDICTED INITIAL WALKOUTS WOULD OCCUR ABOUT AUGUST 1.

3. IF STRIKE LASTS THROUGH SEPTEMBER, IT COULD PLAY
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 01580 122154Z

HAVOC WITH VITALLY IMPORTANT OVERSEAS WHEAT SHIPMENTS

FROM WESTERN CANADA. WE ARE QUITE CONFIDENT, HOWEVER,
THAT GOC WOULD SEEK AND OBTAIN EMERGENCY BACK-TO-WORK
LEGISLATION WELL BEFORE CRISIS STAGE IS EVER REACHED.

4. CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNIONS REPRESENTING
RAILWAY SHOPCRAFTS AND RUNNING TRADES ARE ALSO IN
TROUBLE. PROTRACTED LABOR-MANAGEMENT TALKS HAVE
FAILED TO PRODUCE AGREEMENT IN BOTH INSTANCES AND ARE
NOW MOVING INTO STAGE OF CONCILIATION BOARD HEARINGS
REQUIRED BY FEDERAL LABOR CODE BEFORE UNIONS CAN
STRIKE.
SCHMIDT

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30 JUN 2005

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